

LAVINTHAL

By Dr. Dirt, Oct 2024

You possess the 5 and 2 of spades. Opponents are playing a 4-spade contract, and after declarer takes the first trick, he leads the Ace of spades. You play your 5 to the trick. Then declarer leads the King of spades. You toss your 2. Then declarer plays the Queen of spades. You have no more spades, so you must play a card from a different suit on the trick, in essence, you will “discard” something. Your discard can let partner know which suit of the remaining 3 suits that you do not like and which suit you do like. That is, if you employ the Lavinthal discard system.

Here is your complete hand, spades first, then hearts, then diamonds, then clubs:

5 2 9 5 2 A K 6 10 8 7 6 2

If partner happens to take a trick during the play of the hand, you would like partner to know that you like diamonds. So what card might you play on declarer’s third trump lead to let her know? Well, select a suit that you do not like, in this case either hearts or clubs. You don’t like either suit. If you discard the 9 of hearts, it tells partner that you do not like the heart suit, but that you like diamonds, the higher of the remaining two suits (diamonds and clubs). If you toss the 2 of hearts by mistake, partner would still know that you don’t like hearts, but partner would think you like clubs, the lower of the remaining two suits.

Whatever suit you discard, partner will know that you do not like it. If you toss a high card in a suit that you don’t like, that tells partner you like the higher of the remaining two suits. A low card says you like the lower of the two remaining suits.

Hmmmm. Could you discard club instead and still let partner know you like diamonds? _____
Which club would you discard to let partner know you do not like clubs, but like diamonds? _____
Do you deserve a star for your answer? _____

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Each time you play a hand, and someone discards, keep track of how many times an opponent asks that someone’s partner what the discard meant. Opposing players have a right to that information, but only if they ask. In my experience, those questions are far and few between.

On second thought, just keep track of how many questions your opponents ask in total during the bidding process. Won’t that be informative and fun?????? Yes _____